

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 11, 2020

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Shirley Hines, Commissioner Mary Bray, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
Staff Present: County Administrator Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Nathan Lee

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
INVOCATION – Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the Agenda with one correction under Minutes and one addition under New Business. The correction under Minutes was to change the approval of minutes from October 14, 2020 9:00 am to approval of Minutes on October 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. and to add under New Business 6. Close Hill Haven Road for a construction project. All were in favor.

III. MINUTES

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2020 Regular Meeting. All were in favor.

IV. MUNICIPAL COMMENTS

None

V. CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS COMMENTS

None

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS

None

VII. PUBLIC HEARING

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Administrator Gay stated at the last meeting it was brought to the Board's attention that the State had notified us that we needed to change the Erosion and Sedimentation Control portion of our Ordinance. Administrator Gay had reviewed the Ordinance and did not feel it needed to be changed from what was in Municode. Administrator Gay stated all he could find that may need to be changed was capitalization and some punctuation. Administrator Gay contacted the State and found they were not looking at the most recent copy that was on Municode. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Mary Bray to remove this from the Agenda. All were in favor.
2. Motion was made by Shirley Hines and seconded by Mary Bray to table the appointment to the DFACS Board for District 1. All were in favor.
3. Administrator Gay stated the Board of Commissioners had heard from each of the proposals regarding the Ballfield Property and they could take three different actions today. One would be to table, two would be to select one of the three or three would be to reject all proposals with the County remaining the owner of the Ballfield property. Commissioner Hines hoped each Commissioner could talk before this and it did not happen. Commissioner Hines read a statement aloud and submitted it for the Minutes. Following the reading of the statement from Commissioner Hines, motion was made by Vice

Chairman McCoy and seconded by Chairman Threadgill to table. The vote failed due to no additional votes to table.

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley stated if we table this it will keep coming up. Commissioner Neely-Hadley was not in favor of awarding this. With what they are asking we might as well keep it and continue to collect rent. Administrator Gay advised the Board they could also table until a future date so it would remain active. Beth Neely-Hadley motioned to reject all RFP's for the Ballfield and Mary Bray seconded the motion. All were in favor.

4. Administrator Gay stated on September 22, 2020, the Board heard a presentation regarding establishing fees associated with County Ordinances. The fees were removed from the Ordinance upon codification to prevent having to change the entire section of the Ordinance when there was a change in fees. There is a separate fee sheet. Commissioner Hines asked about Media permits, farm brewery and food trucks. Administrator Gay stated we will rework the media permits and provided examples. The listed fees included road closures and that is what they cover. The County does not have anything in the Ordinance regarding Food Trucks. Cathy Johnson, from Building and Zoning stated Food Trucks fall under the County and Building Licenses. Environmental Health also provides a license for this. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to adopt the consolidated fee schedule. All were in favor.

5. Administrator Gay worked last Saturday on the Land & Water Conservation grant fund. We were looking at \$100K and the Board of Commissioners said they would commit up to \$200K in match. We expanded the walking trail and ADA amenities. The Grant was completed and sent. There is \$200K in cash and \$35K of in-kind service. There is not action needed. Commissioner Hines stated ARP just put out a grant for Trails. You can do exercises at each stop and this may be enough for the trail. This can be brought back if we are fortunate to receive the grant. The award date is in March or April. Commissioner Bray stated she had followed up and they said they had received the grant, and all was in order.

6. Administrator Gay stated they had looked at a location on Woodbury Hwy. for the new Fire Station. Administrator Gay had a friend go by and look at the site and was told there could be some issues with the different intersections of State routes. Administrator Gay showed a map that included property across the street from Greenville High School that belongs to the County. There is a 3.5 acres tract, and the property will be able to have City water and sewerage. Administrator Gay discussed the position of the proposed building and stated if the Commissioners were in favor of this he could speak with the engineer and have the property surveyed. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to accept the proposal of Administrator Gay. All were in favor.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Administrator Gay reached out to Clough Harbour Engineering who had previously worked with us. They sent a proposal for the County Line Road project. Due to the complexity and the wet land mitigation bank, they did not recommend going out for a complete engineering proposal, but to have multiple phases. Phase I would include the Corp of Engineers and Blue Creek stream mitigation review and engineering would be \$109K. We would like to get a meeting set up with GDOT to discuss funding and extra cost assistance. It will be a \$1.2M - \$1.5 M project. Phase I is not all the engineering we will need. Once the Corp of Engineers tells us what they need, we will have to make changes. We can seek proposals from another engineering firm if the Board feels it is needed.

Chairman Threadgill recommend Administrator Gay speak with GDOT. Vice Chairman McCoy added to also find someone to share cost. Administrator Gay stated we may have to buy credits in wetlands but will not know until later. Administrator Gay wants to get a commitment from GDOT. This is a back-emergency route off I-85 or if there is blockage off Hwy. 54. There was additional discussion of options. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Shirley Hines to allow additional engineering firms to quote and have Administrator Gay get with GDOT and bring back. All were in favor.

2. Administrator Gay stated in the past year the Commissioners partnered with road projects that covered more than one district. Luthersville Road is in poor condition. We just received a call from a person who hit a pothole and destroyed their tire. Bill Cawthorne has been grading some of the roads and

LMIG will be on the next agenda. GDOT LMIG funds have dropped this year. There is no action to be taken.

3. Cathy Johnson, Director of Planning, Zoning and Community Development, presented a new alcohol license request from Hugh Summerour, owner of Towerhouse Farm Brewery, LLC. His legal representative, Taylor Harper, was also present to answer any questions regarding Towerhouse Farm Brewery, LLC and tasting room. The paperwork and background check were in order and they are going through the Federal and State process. The property is located at 1621 Jimmy Clark Road in Gay. Hugh Summerour lives on Germany Road and will run the business. There will be tasting rooms there, mainly for businesses who are purchasing the product. Ms. Johnson stated her office recommends approval. They will open as soon as they get the license. All were invited to stop by the farm. There are plans to grow their own barley and hops. There were no other comments. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Shirley Hines to approve the Farm Brewery License and tasting room request for Towerhouse Farm Brewery, LLC. All were in favor.

4. Administrator Gay stated Mack Reynolds sent a letter requesting the County provide a Quit Claim Deed on an abandoned section of County Line Road that was relocated during construction of Meriwether Park Drive. Administrator Gay was unable to find records showing the road had been abandoned and felt it would be best to go through the process and advertise to abandon. Attorney Lee stated the only way you can abandon a road is to go through the abandonment procedure. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Shirley Hines move toward the process of abandoning the section of road located on County Line Road. All were in favor.

5. Administrator Gay stated plans were received back regarding Hill Haven Road Project and a section of Right of Way was needed. Attorney Lee prepared the Right of Way and Temporary Construction Deed. Samuel Carson and Willie D. Carson's names appeared on the property. Willie D. Carson passed away and had willed the property to Samuel Carson. Administrator Gay recommended the Board accept the deed. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to accept the deed. All were in favor.

6. Motion was made by Mary Bray and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to close Hill Haven Road to thru traffic during construction of the culvert project on this road. All were in favor.

X. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director Bill Gregory stated the general fund was at \$3.2M and LMIG money will be moved into the Georgia Asset Pool. Some funds from the 2020 SPLOST were moved to the Asset Pool. Commissioner Hines asked about how funds were allocated for COVID. There are no parameters of how to use the funds. The second round of funds will be more specific. Commissioner Hines stated the City of LaGrange gave money to their employees for having to work during COVID. Administrator Gay was asked by another entity to investigate this and will bring back some information on some uses for the funds. The Property tax collection is at 6.12% and the Fire District and Fire Bond collection is at 6.30%.

XI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Gay reported he had been working on projects for next year. Meetings were held on the Greenville Recreation project and time spend on the grant and plans for the program. Meetings were held regarding the new Fire Stations. Work on Cove Road slowed due to the weather. Owens Road is the same and we are waiting for better weather to compact and pave. We have placed barricades on Hill Haven Road.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Shirley Hines: nothing at this time

Commissioner Mary Bray: congratulated Chairman Threadgill, Rosla Plant and all officials following the election.

Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley: nothing at this time

Vice Chairman McCoy: reported Luthersville Road patching only lasts for a little while and may need to be added to the paving list. Administrator Gay stated he asked Allyson Stephens to reach out to all new elected officials and set up meetings so he could go over their budget and what was needed.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: Thanked everyone who voted to re-elect him and appreciated their vote. Chairman Threadgill stated karma is rough.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Nathan Lee stated there was need for an Executive Session for Litigation and Personnel.

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kennard Rawlinson, Mt. Carmel Road, stated he does not do business in the darkness and is open. Administrator Gay disagreed. Mr. Rawlinson stated he had instructed one of his attorneys to report to the State that the County did not comply with the Open Records Request. Administrator Gay stated that was not true. The County had responded to his Open Records Request.

Mayor Glover of Greenville asked if the County would have a sign coming off Highways of 109 and 100 to let drivers, know Hill Haven is closed. Administrator Gay stated we would have signs in both locations.

Mayor Glover and Commissioner Bray will talk soon regarding Country Christmas.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go into Executive Session at 10:02 am for Litigation and Personnel. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Mary Bray to go out of Executive Session at 10:28 am. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go back into Regular Session at 10:30 am. All were in favor.

No action was taken.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings and notices that were listed on the Agenda prior to Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Mary Bray to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: *Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners*
Attest: *Beverly Thomas*
Date: *11-24-2020*